

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /081 W
-----260415 055970 /70

R 251510Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5261
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0269

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, MORG, MPOL, SF
SUBJ: BLACK ATTITUDES: ROLE OF BLACKS IN THE SOUTH
AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE

REF: 76 PRETORIA 5912

1. SUMMARY: THE SAG BEGAN RECRUITING BLACKS INTO THE
SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE ONLY IN 1975. OUT OF A TOTAL
SADF ACTIVE DUTY STRENGTH OF ABOUT 50,000, ONLY 181 ARE
BLACK. IN AN APARTHEID SOCIETY, RECRUITING OF BLACKS
INTO THE PERMANENT FORCE RAISES DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL
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PROBLEMS. THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE SAG IS MOVING SO
CAUTIOUSLY IN THIS FIELD. THE SMALLNESS AND NEWNESS OF
THE BLACK UNIT MAKE THE TESTING OF ATTITUDES TOWARD
INCORPORATION OF BLACKS INTO THE SADF DIFFICULT.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE ROLE OF BLACKS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE

FORCE (SADF) IS SO RECENT AND THE NUMBERS INVOLVED SO SMALL THAT JUDGMENTS REGARDING ATTITUDES AT THIS STAGE CANNOT BE MEANINGFUL. YET THE NEWNESS AND SMALLNESS OF THE BLACK INVOLVEMENT PROVIDES INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO SAG THINKING ABOUT THE ROLE OF NON-WHITES IN THE DEFENSE FORCE, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE POLICY OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT.

3. THE PRESENT TOTAL STRENGTH OF THE SADF (MEMBERS ON ACTIVE DUTY PLUS TRAINEES) IS ABOUT 50,000. THE DIFFERENT RESERVE UNITS (CITIZEN FORCE AND COMMANDO) COMPRISE ANOTHER 225,000 MEN. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BLACKS IN THE SADF IS ONLY 181, OF WHICH 90 ARE TRAINEES. ALL OF THESE ARE IN THE ARMY. THERE ARE NO BLACKS ON ACTIVE DUTY WITH THE NAVY OR AIR FORCE AND NO BLACK RESERVISTS. BLACKS WERE TAKEN INTO THE ARMY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1975. INDIANS ENTERED THE SADF ALSO FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1975, THEIR ROLE BEING LIMITED TO THE NAVY. COLOREDS HAVE A LONGER TRADITION OF SERVICE BUT WERE NOT ESTABLISHED ON A PERMANENT BASIS UNTIL 1963. THE FOLLOWING CHART SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION GROUPS AMONG THE THREE BRANCHES OF SERVICE:

	ARMY	NAVY	AIR FORCE
A) APPROXIMATE SADF TOTAL	40,000	4,500	6,000
(INCLUDING TRAINEES)			
BLACKS	181		
COLOREDS	576	500	25
INDIANS/ASIANS		145	
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TOTAL	757	645	25
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B) IN TRAINING			
BLACKS	90		
COLOREDS	450		
INDIANS/ASIANS		160	
TOTAL	540	160	

4. FAILURE TO INCORPORATE BLACKS INTO THE SADF UNTIL SO RECENTLY IS A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE POLICY OF APARTHEID. THE DECISION TO TAKE THIS ACTION IN 1975 REFLECTS THE CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S SECURITY POSITION. UNDER THE SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT, EVERY BLACK MAN IS THEORETICALLY IDENTIFIABLE WITH SOME TRIBAL GROUP AND THROUGH THAT TRIBE TO ONE OF THE EIGHT HOMELANDS. WITH ALL HOMELANDS EVENTUALLY TO BECOME INDEPENDENT AND ITS CITIZENS FOREIGNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE APARTHEID DOCTRINE WOULD BE SERIOUSLY BENT IF BLACKS WERE INCORPORATED INTO THE SADF ON A PERMANENT BASIS. THE PRACTICAL CASE FOR NON-INCLUSION WAS THAT AS LONG

AS THE EXTERNAL THREAT WAS MINIMAL AND MAINTENANCE
OF INTERNAL SECURITY WELL WITHIN THE CAPABILITY OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE, THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THE SAG TO
RECRUIT BLACKS INTO THE SADF. (THE POLICE ARE LOOKED
UPON DIFFERENTLY SINCE BLACK POLICEMEN ARE USED LARGELY
IN TOWNSHIPS AND HOMELANDS TO DEAL WITH FELLOW BLACKS.)
WITH THE FALL OF THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE IN APRIL 1974,
SOUTH AFRICA'S SECURITY SITUATION CHANGED. THE DANGERS
INHERENT IN HAVING RADICAL BLACK GOVERNMENTS ALONG ITS
FRONTIERS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF UNREST AMONG BLACKS AT
HOME LED THE SAG TO BEGIN INCORPORATING BLACKS AND
INDIANS INTO THE ARMED SERVICES AND TO INCREASE THE
RECRUITMENT OF COLOREDS. BY DOING THIS, THE SAG HOPES
TO INCREASE ITS SUPPORT FORCES (THIS IS THE TYPE OF TRAINING
THAT BLACKS ARE RECEIVING) AND TO DEMONSTRATE (RATHER BELATDELY)
THAT BLACKS ALSO HAVE A STAKE IN DEFENDING SOUTH AFRICA.
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5. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE SAG'S LONGER TERM INTENTIONS ARE WITH RESPECT TO RECRUITMENT OF NON-WHITES. CHIEF OF THE DEFENSE FORCE GENERAL MAGNUS MALAN IN A RECENT PRESS INTERVIEW SPELLED OUT THE NEED FOR A "TOTAL STRATEGY." THIS, HE SAID, REQUIRED FORMULATION OF NATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN A WAY THAT "ALL THE COUNTRY'S RESOURCES ARE MUSTERED AND MANAGED ON A CO-ORDINATED BASIS TO ENSURE SURVIVAL." HE ADDED THAT THE "DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD EMPLOY FAR MORE PEOPLE FROM OTHER POPULATION GROUPS." NO STATISTICS ON RECRUITMENT ARE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE. DATT HAS LEARNED THAT DURING 1975 SOME 500 BLACKS VOLUNTEERED FOR THE SADF OF WHOM ONLY 48 WERE SELECTED FOR TRAINING
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IN THE SADF AND 43 AS EVENTUAL INSTRUCTORS FOR HOMELAND UNITS. LAST YEAR 217 APPLIED WITH ONLY 90 SELECTED FOR INITIAL TRAINING. INTERESTINGLY, THE AVERAGE AGE OF BLACK ENLISTEES IS 27, SUGGESTING THAT RECRUITS ARE CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THAT SEGMENT OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY MORE DISPOSED TO COOPERATE AND WHO ARE JUST BEYOND THE AGE OF THOSE COMPRISING THE DISSIDENT YOUTH MOVEMENT. THE DATT ALSO REPORTS THAT EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO RECRUIT OFFICER CANDIDATES FROM SEVERAL BLACK UNIVERSITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. WHY BLACKS WOULD BE ATTRACTED TO THE SADF AT THIS STAGE IS NOT CLEAR. DATT'S RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THE PROSPECT OF STEADY WAGES HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS AND THE GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVILIAN SECTOR ARE IMPORTANT FACTORS.

6. THE SAG MOVE TO RECRUIT BLACKS INTO THE SADF IS BELATED AND CAUTIOUS. THE NUMBERS INVOLVED SUGGEST A TRIAL EFFORT TO SEE HOW IT WORKS AND TO EDGE INTO THE DOCTRINAL DEVIATION GRADUALLY. THE BLACK TRAINING BASE IS AT LENZ LOCATED CLOSE TO SOWETO WHERE THE FAMILIES OF SOLDIERS LIVE. BLACK PERSONNEL ARE PROHIBITED FROM WEARING UNIFORMS OFF BASE. DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE SOWETO DISTURBANCES LAST YEAR, THE SAG FOUND IT NECESSARY TO EVACUATE THE FAMILIES OF BLACK SOLDIERS AND THEIR BELONGINGS FROM SOWETO TO THE LENZ BASE. HOW SUCCESSFUL THIS EXPERIMENT WILL BE IN TERMS OF DEVELOPING LOYAL, DISCIPLINED FORCES AND OF THEIR ACCEPTABILITY TO THE NON-WHITE POPULATION GROUPS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. AS IN THE CASE OF THE POLICE, USE OF BLACKS TO DEFEND AN APARTHEID SYSTEM IS FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS AND RISKS. THE NUMBER OF THOSE NOW

INVOLVED IN THE SADF IS SO SMALL AND THEIR TIME IN UNIFORM
SO RECENT THAT ATTITUDES CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY TESTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, CONSCRIPTION, ARMED FORCES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, MINORITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAPET00269
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770067-0141
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770210/aaaaaivy.tel
Line Count: 227
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6e461fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PRETORIA 5912
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3231969
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BLACK ATTITUDES: ROLE OF BLACKS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, MORG, MPOL, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6e461fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009